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Seminar in Applied Theory and Research 1

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Reflection #1

The Brooklyn College School of Education’s Conceptual Framework correlates very strongly to the course objectives and designated declarations of the graduate course, Seminar in Applied Theory and Research. Brooklyn College’s conceptual framework states that its goal is to “prepare teachers, administrators, counselors, and school psychologists to serve, to lead and thrive in the schools and agencies of this city and beyond. Through collaborative action, teaching, and research, we develop our students’ capacities to create socially just, intellectually vital, aesthetically rich and compassionate communities that value equity and excellence, access and rigor.” Further, the Mission Statement for the School of Education has four cardinal themes resonating thru it. The four themes are as follows: ***diversity*, *collaboration*, *social justice*, and *critical self*–*reflection* and *reflective practice*.** These themes define the core underlining commitments of “… working collectively with others; understanding and valuing human differences; understanding and striving to end social injustice, and understanding and thinking deeply about one’s own involvement in one’s work and how one sees the world.” When dissecting the objectives of Seminar in Applied Theory and Research, one can see how these themes from the Mission statement resonate through the course, and that the goals of both the School of Education and the course are closely aligned.

A primary objective of the course states that the researcher will “demonstrate an understanding of Action Research and how Action Research is used in education.” One of the definitions Action Research is collaborative inquiry or simply stated, action research is “learning by doing” - a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again. Action Research demands the intelligent, collaborative efforts of research participants stressing the importance of cooperative learning as a primary function of the research process. The implementation of Action Research when used as a tool to further define and clarify the educational process clearly is aligned with the second of the four themes highlighted in the Education Departments Conceptual Framework, which is “collaboration.” By engaging ourselves in this extensive research process, the optimism is that the new to the system teachers will garner a decidedly clearer understanding of the educational system and the challenges educators are facing in today’s educational process.

Two other objectives delineated in the syllabus are the “demonstrating an understanding of the ethical issues of research and the implications for the work as teacher-researcher” and “reflecting on his/her own practice and examine implications for future work.” These two goals are closely aligned with Brooklyn’s Colleges Department of Education’s Conceptual Framework themes of “social justice,” and “critical self-reflection.” In fact, these goals are simply restating the department’s commitment to these ideas in specific, personal instances. In attaining these goals, Brooklyn College students become better prepared to educate future generations.

Those students who enter and successfully complete the Master’s Program for teaching certification by meeting or surpassing the objectives of both this course and of the Conceptual Framework of the Education Department will be more thoroughly prepared to instruct their students in this ever expanding pluralistic community called the classroom. Today’s teacher needs to impart to their students the understanding that each and every one of their classmates is different and that those differences should be embraced. The students need to understand and endeavor to end social injustices that permeate today’s society and it is the job of educators to provide them with the tools to do so. Perhaps the most important job of an educator however, is teaching students to take responsibility for their own immersion into their work and educational process.